

Message Text

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ORIGIN EUR-12

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DRAFTED BY EUR/RPM:BCLARK
APPROVED BY EUR/RPM:SJLEDOGAR
EUR/RPM:AMB. SHERER
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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE PRIORITY
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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 010745

BELGRADE FOR USDEL CSCE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CSCE

SUBJECT: SWISS PROPOSAL IN THE FIELD OF INFORMATION

1. DURING JANUARY 13 CALL ON AMBASSADOR SHERER,
SWISS AMBASSADOR PROBST PRESENTED FOLLOWING NON-PAPER
URGING US SUPPORT FOR SWISS PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH EXPERT
GROUP ON WORKING CONDITIONS FOR JOURNALISTS. AMBASSADOR
SHERER SAID ON A PERSONAL BASIS THAT HE THOUGHT THE US
VIEWED THE SWISS PROPOSAL SYMPATHETICALLY, BUT THAT IT
WAS UNLIKELY THE SWISS PROPOSAL WOULD SUCCEED.

2. BEGIN TEXT OF SWISS NON-PAPER:

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AS WILL BE REMEMBERED, THE SWISS DELEGATION TO THE
BELGRADE CONFERENCE ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN
EUROPE HAS PRESENTED A PROPOSAL IN THE FIELD OF INFORMATION
(SEE DOCUMENT BM/8). AMONG OTHER THINGS, THIS INITIATIVE
CONTAINS THE IDEA OF CREATING A GROUP OF EXPERTS WHOSE
TASK WOULD BE TO DRAFT A CONVENTION RELATING TO THE
WORKING CONDITIONS OF JOURNALISTS AND TO THE MEASURES

AIMED AT INCREASING AND IMPROVING THE CIRCULATION OF
PRINTED INFORMATION.

AS IT NOW APPEARS, PARTICULARLY IN REGARD TO THE
EXPERIENCE OF THE PAST THREE MONTHS, THE BELGRADE
CONFERENCE IS NOT LIKELY TO PRODUCE A VERY SUBSTANTIAL
TEXT IN THE AREA OF INFORMATION. HOWEVER, THE
SWISS AUTHORITIES BELIEVE THAT, FOR REASONS OF
PRINCIPLE AS WELL AS IN VIEW OF PUBLIC OPINION, IT IS
IMPORTANT THAT IN THE FINAL DOCUMENT OF THE CONFERENCE THE
CHAPTER ON INFORMATION NOT BE COMPLETELY NEGLECTED.

SWITZERLAND BY NO MEANS FAVORS THE PROLIFERATION OF
GROUPS OF EXPERTS AND PROPOSES THE CREATION OF THE ONE
REFERRED TO ABOVE ONLY BECAUSE, BY ITS VERY NATURE, THE
SWISS PROJECT CANNOT BE ACHIEVED AT THIS JUNCTURE IN
BELGRADE. FURTHERMORE, IT MUST BE KEPT IN MIND THAT THIS
GROUP OF EXPERTS WOULD HAVE A PRECISE MANDATE.

THIS GROUP, WHICH WOULD CONVENE IN 1979, WOULD MAKE
IT POSSIBLE TO MAINTAIN PRESSURE IN THE FIELD OF INFOR-
MATION. IN THE VIEW OF THE SWISS AUTHORITIES, SUCH AN
ATTITUDE HAS SIGNIFICANCE FOR COUNTRIES LIKE OURS.

THE RECENT PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED BY WESTERN JOURNALISTS
IN EASTERN EUROPE LEAD SWITZERLAND TO THE CONCLUSION THAT
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THE IMPROVEMENT OF THEIR WORKING CONDITIONS IS, AT
PRESENT, A VERY REAL CONCERN.

THE SWISS AUTHORITIES HOPE THAT THE UNITED STATES
GOVERNMENT WILL NOT FAIL TO SUPPORT THE ABOVE-
MENTIONED SWISS INITIATIVE, INCLUDING THE CREATION OF
A GROUP OF EXPERTS IN THAT CONTEXT.

END TEXT.

CHRISTOPHER

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